



GenJ Club of the Month: *The Knute Nelson Generation Joshua Club — Minnesota*

Founded in September 2006, the Knute Nelson Generation Joshua

Club is located in Minnesota's 7th Congressional District. "We chose to name our club after Knute Nelson because he is from Alexandria, the town that the club is spread around," said Club President, Ian Willard. "If you look back at his life, he had quite a few major accomplishments. He served in the Union army during the civil war, was a State Senator for four years, a Congressman for six years, Governor for three years, and a US Senator for 28 years. He was also a Republican and a Christian!"

When it started a year ago, the club had only five members, but it quickly expanded and currently boast 21 GenJ members meet on a regular basis. They expect their numbers to grow over the next year. The club meets once a month, even through the summer, and occasionally at other times for special events.

Club meetings have included discussions on terrorism, immigration, and even a heated debate on whether a woman should be elected president of the US. In a less controversial meeting, they read and wrote summaries about the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution.

From the beginning, the Knute Nelson club officers decided that the best way to teach club members about government was to hear directly from those who work in it. As a result, they invited local officials to speak at each meeting. They started with a local mayor, then a county

commissioner, and a county attorney. Field trips have included attending a County Commissioner meeting, touring the county courthouse, and a trip to the State Capitol to meet with their State Senator and Representative. While there, the club watched the Senate in session and toured the Capitol grounds.

On September 14th, the Knute Nelson club hosted their own Constitution Day celebration. "We thought that it'd be a good idea to host an event that our club could work together on, which would be both educational and also increase the size of our club," said Ian. The event was held in the auditorium of a local college. The club arranged for 15 different businesses to donate money and supplies for the event so all attendees could come free of charge. "We invited the former Minnesota Secretary of State, our State Senator and State Representative, and a homeschool graduate with a Masters in Political Management to speak about the Constitution and political involvement," Ian added. Members of the club also performed a skit about why attendees should join GenJ. Altogether approximately 120 people attended and the club signed up 10 new members for GenJ, most of whom have now joined the club.

In addition to working with elected officials the club has also volunteered on several campaigns to help elect candidates in local, state and even federal races. In 2006, several club members worked on Michele Bachmann's campaign for the 6th US Congressional District of Minnesota; they helped Bill Ingebrigtsen beat out Dallas Sams, a 16-year incumbent in the Minnesota State Senate; and on a smaller scale, they helped a friend run for County Sheriff. Despite the fact his opponent had the support of the outgoing Sheriff and outspent him 8 to 1, their candidate won!

"The Knute Nelson GenJ Club has done an excellent job of promoting civic involvement and government awareness among young people," said Club adult sponsor, Tanya Willard. "As a group of diverse personalities, they have exhibited strong organizational and leadership skills. They are dedicated, creative, and



focused while setting fun, achievable goals."

As far as the future of Knute Nelson GenJ Club, Ian says, "We want to continue to get involved. That is something our club has been doing since the beginning, but now that we actually *have* made a difference we don't want to stop. In addition, we want to expand our membership. We're still a fairly small club and there's a lot of homeschoolers in our area that could join if they wanted to. So we're going to continue spreading the word about GenJ and make our club grow. Last, we want to train the next generation of Generation Joshua to keep our club alive after all the founding members leave [graduate] in the next year or two."

For more information about this or any other GenJ club; or for help starting your own club please visit our website at: www.generationjoshua.org. Click on the GenJ Club link or email GenJ's National Club Coordinator, Joel Grewe, at GenerationJoshua@hsllda.org.

If your club has participated in noteworthy activities and you'd like to be highlighted in Liberty's Call please email the editor at GenerationJoshua@hsllda.org.



Club Stats:

Name of club: *The Knute Nelson Generation Joshua Club*

Location: Alexandria, MN (MN-7)

Founded: September 2006

Officers: Ian Willard (President), Seth Willard (VP), Kwende Kiemle (Secretary), and Sam Paradee (Treasurer)